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ABSTRACT

The paper describes the Interactive Model for Professional Action and Change for Teachers (IMPACT), a collaborative project based on a consulting teacher model which provides inservice classroom based inservice training for teachers and individualized instruction for high school students with mild handicapping conditions. The model incorporates three levels of inservice teacher training: workshops (arranged by the consulting teachers in response to the basic competency areas identified by groups of teachers); courses (offered for graduate credit by the consulting teachers in areas which include learning strategies, curriculum development, and behavior management); and consultation (provided in the form of team teaching between regular and special educators). The IMPACT program in an English department and in a math department exemplified competency training and use of the workshop for inservice training. It is concluded that the model of collaboration between regular and consulting teachers utilized five components in inservice training (theory, demonstration, practice, feedback, and coaching) and resulted in both effective staff development and actual change in the classroom. (SB)

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COLLABORATIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS TO MEET CLASSROOM NEEDS

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The Interactive Model for Professional Action and Change for Teachers (IMPACT) is a collaborative project of South Burlington High School and the University of Vermont, funded, in part, by the Division of Innovation and Development, Office of Special Education. IMPACT is an adaption of the consulting teacher model of special education[1], (McKenzie, Egner, Knight, Perelman, Schneider, and Garvin, 1970; Egner and Lates, 1975; Knight, Meyers, Paolucci-Whitcomb, Hasazi, and Nevin, 1981) which provides classroom-based inservice training for teachers and individualized instruction for students with handicapping conditions.

Student's mastery of State-mandated Basic Competencies is the focus of the teacher training and classroom instruction provided by IMPACT. The Basic Competencies are "skills that are essential for further learning as well as for practical application in everyday life", (Vermont Department of Education, 1977). Beginning in 1981, mastery of Basic Competencies in reading, writing, speaking, listening and mathematics (reasoning in 1983), became a requirement for graduation from high school.

The South Burlington School District responded by using an interactive process involving administrators, special educators and department chairpersons ( ). School district administrators began by assuming that the district had the necessary resources for carrying out the basic competency mandate. The district staff included not only regular teachers with expertise in specific content areas, but also consulting teachers trained in a variety of technical skills that have proven effective in teaching mildly handicapped students. A

[1] This model is explained in greater detail below.

further assumption was that teachers are eager to examine and practice new techniques as part of the continual process of personal and professional development.

A test for each competency was developed and all students were tested. This data base was used to identify the district's inservice needs. The next step was to decide how to deliver the inservice training that was required. Administration asked the Consulting Teachers to be leaders in developing inservice programs in basic skill areas since 1) consulting teachers were associate faculty members of the University of Vermont and had expertise in designing systems for delivering inservice training, and 2) the consulting teachers had worked interactively during the test development phase.

Three levels of inservice teacher training were used: courses, workshops and consultation designed to improve instruction for students with handicapping conditions. The content and precise format of the inservice training for a particular school was dependent upon the measured instructional needs of students, as well as the training needs of teachers as perceived by the teachers themselves and school administrators. This attention by staff developers to the teachers' current needs was consistent with the principles outlined in the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (Hall, 1981). These principles rest on the assumption that personnel concerns are a very real part of the change process and need to be acknowledged and recognized as legitimate. Thus teachers' needs and concerns, as well as students needs, formed the basis for staff development activities.

Level I: Workshops

Workshops were arranged by the consulting teachers in response to the Basic Competency areas identified by groups of teachers. The workshops focused on the development of teaching strategies and curriculum materials to increase

the probability that low performing students would master the basic competencies. Workshops varied in length. They consisted of half-day, week-long, and ongoing sessions lasting as long as a semester.

Level II: Courses

Courses were offered for graduate credit by the consulting teachers under the auspices of the University of Vermont. The course offerings were in response to the generalized needs of teachers and included teachers from several schools and districts. Content focused on individualized instruction, curriculum development, cooperative learning (Johnson & Johnson, 1975), learning strategies (Carlson, 1979), direct instruction (Rosenshine,), and behavior management. Each three credit course requires 45 hours of meeting time and 90 hours of practicum.

Level III: Consultation

Consultation in the form of team teaching between regular and special educators was the most intensive level of inservice training which resulted from collaborative efforts in relation to basic competencies. Through the use of cooperative weekly planning, team teaching and shared evaluation, special and regular educators: 1) built ongoing working relationships, 2) developed curriculum sequences, and 3) implemented teaching strategies in the classroom. Considerable gains have been made in the number of students successfully achieving the skills necessary to meet the competency standards in regular classroom settings.

Only if teacher skills, concepts and principles are actually transferred to the classroom by integrating it into the teacher's style, and combining it with other strategies in the teacher's repertoire can we expect an impact on the education of children.

Joyce and Showers (1980) research shows that when certain components are combined in a training sequence, the highest level of impact takes place. The components which they found to be necessary for this high level of impact were the following:.

1) Presentation of theory or description of skill or strategy

2) Modeling or demonstration of skills or models of teaching

3) Practice in simulated and classroom setting

4) Structured and open-ended feedback

5) Coaching for application (hands-on, in-classroom assistance with the transfer of skills and strategies to the classroom).

Consultation, in the form of team teaching as described, includes all of these components.

The Program in Operation

Communication among consulting teachers, guidance counselors and English teachers regarding the I.E.P.'s of low-performing students raised a common awareness that many of the students having difficulty with basic competencies were also eligible for special education services and that teaching/learning procedures developed by the consulting teachers for use with these students outside their regular classrooms could become a part of the curriculum used in the classroom.

Thus, from the onset, consulting teachers and English teachers had a shared purpose. This positive interdependence resulted from the fact that certain basic competencies had been delegated to content area teachers as part of the new accountability system. While the content area teachers were willing to assume this responsibility, they needed specific strategies to increase the likelihood that low-performing students would master these competencies in the regular classroom.

At the same time, consulting teachers were anxious to serve these students in a mainstreamed setting. It became more and more apparent that consulting teachers and regular classroom teachers were motivated to use their diverse strengths to support a cooperative endeavor as members of a team. Contributions to this enterprise capitalized on the specialized but different expertise of each member. This collegial approach to the task eliminated the possibility that the specialist would end up telling the regular classroom teacher what to do or vice versa. In addition, teachers involved in the task of developing curriculum materials and techniques committed themselves to actual implementation. A fringe benefit of teacher participation in small, task-oriented groups was that their interpersonal skills improved, increasing their ability to work effectively with each other in the future (Johnson and Johnson, 1980). At this point a decision was made to have English teachers and consulting teachers work together in four team-taught English classes.

The English Department (an example of what happened with one competency in these classes).

This team of consulting teachers and English teachers identified a competency in writing as an area of need. It was determined that many students, including those categorized as learning disabled, were not mastering Writing Basic Competency Number 8: "Given directions to choose a topic and to write a one-page composition with the use of a dictionary, the student will write the composition with proper paragraphing, with complete sentences, with a logical arrangement of ideas and facts, containing no more than 5 errors in grammer, usage, spelling and punctuation, so that it is legible to the evaluator." It was further recognized that teachers in the English department had not developed specific teaching/learning strategies to teach this writing competency to low-performing students.

The English Department chair identified two faculty members in the department who were willing to develop teaching strategies as part of a team with consulting teachers. IMPACT engaged external consultants to present a workshop on writing skills. One consultant presented the Vermont Writing Program (Escholz and Rosa 1977-80) which includes procedures for the teacher to give ongoing corrective feedback through a series of revisions. The Vermont Writing Program procedures were successful for the majority of students, but not for many students with learning problems. In order to help these learning disabled students, the consulting teachers sought the advice of staff members from Project STILE and the Learning Disabilities Institute at the University of Kansas. Using an error monitoring strategy (Schumaker, Deshler, Nolan, Clark, Alley and Warner, 1981), students were taught how to detect errors in their own writing rather than relying solely on corrective feedback from the classroom teacher. Students learned to ask and answer a series of questions about their writing such as "Have I capitalized the first word in every sentence?"

The English teachers and the consulting teachers devoted their weekly staff meetings to generating needed materials for error monitoring. First, a packet of teacher-generated writings with an array of errors that would allow students to practice asking and answering error monitoring questions was compiled. Then, consulting teachers demonstrated the use of these writings in the classroom. Next, English teachers practiced using the error monitoring procedures and the newly-developed writing materials with the students. Finally, working in cooperative groups, students used these procedures on their own writing as an editing process.

The Math Department (an example of using a workshop for inservice training).

The math department observed that a majority of students entering high school had not mastered Math Basic Competency Number 20 — finding a quotient. The competency states: "Given 5 problems of 4-digit dividends and 2-digit divisors with decimal points in varying positions in both numerals, the student will write each quotient, rounding off to 4 digits, with at least 80% accuracy (no more than 1 error). Furthermore, the math department had not developed a specific teaching/learning strategy to teach that particular competency.

In order to provide data-based math instruction related to teaching this competency, the planning group composed of the department chair and the consulting teacher selected and enlisted the help of teachers who were considered master teachers by their peers in the system's middle school. A sequence of workshops resulted, during which consulting teachers and math teachers from the high school and middle school: 1) task-analyzed Math Basic Competency Number 20, 2) revised and adapted materials to meet the needs of high school students, and 3) developed learning units with a step-by-step procedure for mastery of the competency. The consulting teachers then modelled use of the Math Basic Competency #20 packet and participants had a chance to practice using the materials. At follow-up meetings using the interactive process, participants discussed how they were using the packet and revisions were made. With the support of the newly developed materials, and feedback and coaching from the consulting teacher, the teachers were able to incorporate the new learning materials into their teaching. Predictably, the proportion of students who mastered Math Basic Competency Number 20 increased dramatically during the following year. Before the inservice training, 43% of the special education students had mastered the competency, whereas after, 87% achieved mastery.

Summary

From the beginning, consulting teachers, math teachers and English teachers had a shared purpose. This positive interdependence resulted from the fact that many students were not passing certain Basic Competencies. While the math and English teachers were willing to assume responsibility for developing a course designed to meet the needs of these students, they needed specific strategies to increase the likelihood that low-performing students would master the Basic Competencies. At the same time, consulting teachers were anxious to serve students with similar skills deficits in a mainstreamed setting. It became more and more apparent that consulting teachers and classroom teachers could use their diverse strengths to support a cooperative endeavor as members of a team. Contributions to this enterprise capitalized on the specialized but different expertise of each member. This collegial approach to the task eliminated the possibility that the specialist would end up telling the regular classroom teacher what to do or vice versa. Also because the teachers were involved in the task of developing curriculum materials and strategies, they were committed to translating their work on the team into actual classroom practice.

The interaction that took place during the collaborative planning and monitoring phases of the process led to an awareness by participants of their own resources and needs. This was the foundation of their interdependence and the basis for their confidence that the group could solve any problems that might arise during implementation. Once a collaborative working

relationship was established during the planning stage, staff members were committed to continue working as a team. Partnerships consisted of consulting teachers and classroom teachers working together in the classroom and meeting weekly to discuss procedures being used in classes.

Working side-by-side on a daily basis in the regular classroom and meeting weekly to adapt and plan the ongoing curriculum, consulting teachers and regular class teachers became effective problem solvers. With this support and in-classroom assistance, teachers could base changes in curriculum and teaching strategies on the actual observed needs of students in their classrooms.

This model of collaboration between regular and consulting teachers utilized Joyce's (1980) five components of inservice training (theory, demonstration, practice, feedback and coaching) and resulted in both effective staff development and actual change in the classroom for the benefit of all students.

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